

Of Human Interest: News lite

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FOOD CHOKING ACT

Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif., has introduced the "Food Choking Prevention Act" in Congress. It would require the Food and Drug Administration to create an office to investigate food products that have been associated with unusual choking incidents, and determine whether they pose significant choking risks to children.

Honda says that since 1999 at least two children from the San Francisco Bay area have died from choking on "gel candies" while another child was paralyzed.

Six deaths have been linked to these candies in the United States, he says, but here is no way to know the total number of deaths or injuries that result from food choking hazards because there is no adequate reporting system.

The legislation would give the FDA mandatory recall authority for foods that pose an unacceptable choking hazard.

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HOSTILITY HURTS HEART

Hostility could be a better predictor of heart disease than traditional risk factors such as high cholesterol, cigarette smoking and obesity, according to research in the November issue of Health Psychology, published by the American Psychological Association.

A study looking at 774 older men -- the average age 60 -- from the Normative Aging Study finds heart disease was more common among those with higher levels of hostility than those with the risk factors of high cholesterol, alcohol intake and smoking tobacco.

They say high hostility levels could predispose a person to heart disease through other mechanisms not measured in the study, like cardiac arrhythmia, imbalances in the nervous system or cardiovascular and endocrine responses to stress.

The study suggests mental health and health care providers look at the effectiveness of providing psychological interventions for people who have high hostility levels.

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TECH SPENDING IN SCHOOLS UP SLIGHTLY

Education market researcher Quality Education Data Inc. says one major study of educational technology spending predicts modest increases for the 2002-2003 school year.

Technology Purchasing Forecast reports total technology spending among U.S. public school districts was at \$6.45 billion for the 2001-2002 school year, and projects \$7.18 billion this year.

The report says Macintosh is the most common brand of instructional computer in schools today, but Windows/Intel computers constitute more than two-thirds of the installed base and of those, Dell is the most common brand.

Almost one-half of the districts surveyed report having wireless devices and one-third of all districts report they will purchase wireless devices this year. Of these, 72 percent are laptop computers.

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TOYS 'R' US IN THE GROCERY STORE

Chicago shoppers soon will see Toys "R" Us outlets in their grocery and drug stores.

The giant toy retailer is conducting a limited test of its Toy Box stores within Albertson's Jewel-Osco stores in the Chicago area.

Toys "R" Us launched the Toy Box concept last year, a store-within-a-store concept that offers customers a selection of the most popular toys.

Rick Markee, president for specialty businesses and international operations at Toys "R" Us, calls it an "idea whose time has come."

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